

KING BUNCO'S NEW GAME.

A New York Hotel Clerk Explains a Curious Point of a Sharp-er's Trade.

How Male and Female Guests Manage to Communicate With Gotham Visitors.

Decey Letters to Hotel Guests and One Use of a Detective-Why Mail Is Held.

A young visitor to the city, who registered at one of the big up-town hotels a fortnight ago, handed to the night clerk a couple of nights ago an envelope containing a neatly written invitation to the guest to call at an office in lower Broadway at his convenience, and have the details of a very desirable stock investment unfolded to him, says the New York Sun. The letter bore a signature the guest had never seen before.

"I don't know that person," he said to the clerk, in a puzzled way. "How on earth did he find out that I was staying here?"

"Don't you pay any attention to that nice little invitation," the clerk said. "That's a little bunco scheme. The fellow who is working it is pretty smart, too. They don't usually get past hotel clerks nowadays with this sort of letters. This was overlooked somehow."

The guest was interested, and the clerk spent about five minutes in explaining to him the details of the "hotel register racket."

He told the stranger that the letter he had received was the usual preliminary decoy.

The register racket some years ago was one of the most persistently worked swindling systems practiced in this town and all the big cities. It was worked with great profit by both men and women of shady reputation, but more particularly the latter. Not so very long ago about every man that came to town with any reputation for the possession of money received in the mail that was sent to his room or left in his letter box at the hotel office perfunctory letters, written in a feminine hand. They contained invitations to meet a fair admirer, or to call and get a quiet tip from an old family friend of a chance to make a big pot of money on an investment that no other outsider knew anything of as yet. Prominent and wealthy guests were pestered with these missives daily. They came with every mail, and in every case where the recipient was foolish enough to answer them in person he was bled to a greater or less amount. Some elaborate blackmail schemes were started in this fashion. Clergymen were not exempted from this annoyance. Later, however, the male sharpers, and the adventuresses, too, have encountered difficulty in catching the auwary.

The clerk explained unctuously to the stranger that this embargo and the sharpers was due to the vigilance of the clerks or the private detectives of the hotels. As soon as a clerk became aware of the character of the missive in the envelope he took care that it never reached its destination. The perfumery, the feminine hand, and the shape of the envelope used by the female sharper formerly gave a certain clue," the clerk said, "but nowadays the sharpers have got to using ordinary envelopes, and as a result mail is not sent to the guest at his room at all. It is held at the office to guard against these decoy missives reaching him. He calls at the office to get his letters and the clerk warns him that certain envelopes look 'crooked.' The guest seldom takes offense at this warning, as the clerk takes care to make it plain that he has only the welfare of the guest in mind, and is not bothering with things that don't concern him."

"Yes," chimed in the guest, "but how do you discover the suspicious look of which you speak?"

"That's very easy. For example, you can always detect when a card is enclosed in an envelope by simply bending the envelope back and forth, and the suspicion that it's a 'crook's' card can then be made positive proof if you run a lead pencil through the unglued part of the flap of the envelope, bend the envelope out, and take a peep inside. The name on the card can often be detected in this way readily."

"Now, do not misconstrue this, sir, I beg of you, to mean that clerks have a habit of reading communications addressed to guests. It is obvious that a letter could not be read in its entirety by this method even if a clerk was mean enough to try that scheme. But enough of a circular that is crooked can be discovered at a glance to reveal its iniquitous purport, and enable us to put a man on his guard. We only do this where we think there is a chance of a guest being deceived by sharpers."

"I should think that some of them would get as mad as hops at you," retorted the stranger.

"Oh, we guard against that," the clerk replied with a smile. "In a case where we know or have a suspicion of the character of the letter addressed to any particular guest, and believe that the letter is likely to kick, we just give the tip to the hotel detective. He watches the guest as he opens the letter, then saunters up to him, tells him he is, and says that he has reason to believe from information that has reached him that some local sharper has selected him for a victim. The guest, of course, will look surprised at this, and if he has received a crooked missive he will tell the detective—oh, you leave it to these honey-tongued detectives to get around a man—and will want to know how in thunder he found out the character of the letter he received. If we have made a mistake, it is equally sure that the guest will let the detective know. But it is mighty easy for the detective to slide out of the dilemma by saying that he has trustworthy information despite the mistake, and knows what he is talking about, and warning the guest to be on the lookout."

"This is all very interesting," exclaimed the guest, as he went down into his pocket for a cigar and held it out to the clerk, "but you haven't told me yet how it was that this sharper discovered my name."

The clerk laughed, then gave the guest this valuable tip:

"There is a hotel newspaper published every week in this city that makes a specialty of printing the arrivals at the leading hotels. The sharpers who are looking for the class of victims of which we are speaking all read this paper. It costs them \$2.50 a year. They send their decoy letters to every name printed in this paper. This is particularly true of the women engaged in disreputable business. I know that they have in times gone by caught many men of means in this way. They still keep up the practice, though, as I say, there are a great many obstacles in their way nowadays."

The clerk struck a match and leisurely lighted his cigar, while the guest walked into the hotel art gallery with the hotel detective. The little Vidooq sat down near a celebrated French painting and ordered some twenty-year-old whisky.

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There was a terrible epidemic of dysentery and bloody flux in Pope county, Illinois, last summer. As many as five deaths occurred in one day. Messrs. Walter Brothers, of Waltersburg, sold over 300 bottles of Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy during this epidemic, and say they never heard of its failing in any case when the directions were followed. It was the only medicine used that did cure the worst cases. Many persons were cured by it after the doctors had given them up. Twenty-five and 50-cent bottles for sale by H. M. Parchen & Co.



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Grand Monthly Drawings held in the Morenos Pavilion in the Alameda Park, City of Mexico, and publicly conducted by Government Officials appointed for the purpose by the Secretaries of the Interior and the Treasury.

The monthly Four Dollar Drawing will be held

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CAPITAL PRIZE, \$60,000!

80,000 Tickets at \$4, \$320,000.

2,376 Prizes, Amounting to \$178,560.

Price of Tickets, American Money.

Wholes, \$4; Halves, \$2; Quarters, \$1.

LIST OF PRIZES:

1 Capital Prize of \$60,000 is	\$60,000
1 Capital Prize of 20,000 is	20,000
1 Capital Prize of 10,000 is	10,000
1 Capital Prize of 5,000 is	5,000
1 Capital Prize of 2,000 is	2,000
1 Capital Prize of 1,000 is	1,000
1 Capital Prize of 500 is	500
1 Capital Prize of 250 is	250
1 Capital Prize of 100 is	100
1 Capital Prize of 50 is	50
1 Capital Prize of 25 is	25
1 Capital Prize of 10 is	10
1 Capital Prize of 5 is	5
1 Capital Prize of 2 is	2
1 Capital Prize of 1 is	1

APPROXIMATION PRIZES.

150 Prizes of \$60, approximation to	\$9,000
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150 Prizes of \$40, approximation to	6,000
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2276 All prizes sold in the United States full paid in United States currency.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

By terms of contract the company must deposit the sum of all prizes certified in the scheme before selling a single ticket, and receive the following official permit:

CERTIFICATE—I hereby certify that the London Bank of Mexico and South America has on special deposit the necessary funds to guarantee the payment of all prizes drawn by the Loteria de la Beneficencia Publica.

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Further, the company is required to distribute fifty-six per cent of the value of all the tickets in prizes, a larger proportion than is given by any other lottery.

All drawings under the personal supervision and management of Dr. Ramon Rodriguez Rivera, Intervenor appointed by the government. List of prizes will be sent immediately after the drawing to all correspondents, or on application. Prizes may be deposited for collection with any Bank or Express company, or sent through them or by mail (in order to this office).

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